



August 2, 2017

Honorable Rob Bonta
California State Assembly
State Capitol Room 2148
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: SUPPORT AB1479 Bonta

Dear Assemblyman Bonta:

United Reporting Publishing Corporation (URPC), Crime Beat News strongly supports your measure Assembly Bill 1479 imposing sanctions on an agency for not disclosing a public record when the agency has not acted in good faith. This measure strikes an important balance and provides a reasonable remedy against those who abuse their positions by denying public record requests by imposing unreasonable fees or at worst delaying a response to a request.

As a statewide crime newspaper, we seek arrest records from most of the over 300 city police departments, all 58-county sheriffs, and several statewide law enforcement groups. (Unfortunately, some refuse to acknowledge our request.) URPC requests arrest data from these agencies as set forth in Government Code Section 6254 (f) (1) (3). The only information we request are the items the code specifies. We do not ask for investigative records or information. We also ask that the requested information be transmitted to us electronically pursuant to Government Code Section 6253.9. With each request, we offer to pay for any programming fees or direct cost of providing the data requested in electronic format. Currently, there are several agencies that state that they do not have the information in electronic format, yet they are able to print out the data we are requesting and place it at their front counter. This raises the question of how they can print a computer generated document and yet not have an electronic copy of the data.

We also consistently receive responses to our requests that are over 30 days after our original request was made. Many times, the denial of the request will cite lack of a declaration, which was included in the mailed request. This delay will then entail another 30 days wait only to be told that the record requested is not in an electronic format as mentioned above. Many agencies attempt to delay in hopes that a requester will go away frustrated. In quite a few of the responses I receive, you can tell that the person writing the response started from a position of how can I deny this request. Instead, the code envisions the agency helping the requester obtain information on how their government is being operated in order to facilitate the processing of the request. Adding a penalty for failure to perform their duties, can be an incentive for agencies to deal with PRA requests in a timely manner.

As the premier California internet based crime newspaper, who has partnered with several local traditional print newspapers around the state to provide specialized content, we strongly support this measure. Our syndication partners range from the San Francisco Chronicle (SFGATE), Sacramento Bee, Gold Country Papers, and Fresno Bee. Yet even with this level of syndication, many local police agencies continue to drag their heels in responding to public record requests. Please feel free to contact my office if you have any questions or concerns about my company's position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul R. Curry".

Paul R. Curry
CEO/Publisher